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Rescue

A digest of Williamsburg-James City-
York news during April 23-30, 1980

In Sum

A replica of the U.S. Embassy in Iran was developed at Camp Peary for use by the 90-man commando unit to train for its aborted assault to free the American hostages. The CIA reportedly did not have any agents participating in the training. Story on page 1.

Commandos trained at Peary

A replica of the U.S. Embassy in Tehran was fashioned at nearby Camp Peary and used for almost 30 practice missions by the commandos who participated in the aborted rescue of American hostages last week. So reports the New York Daily News in its Tuesday editions.

Harrison Rainie, who covers the military and Capitol Hill for the newspaper, gave a detailed account of how the U.S. troops planned to slip up to the entrance of the embassy and gain access to the hostages.

The plan was for the 90-man American commando squad to join with sympathetic Iranians to move around the perimeter of the embassy, cutting phone and electric power lines while simultaneously using gas or other force to neutralize the few militants at guard posts.

A hole was to be blown in the walls of the embassy to allow trucks to roar in to the rescue. Rainie wrote that the remaining

embassy captors were to be "cut down" with gas garrotes and guns with silencers. Then a squadron of giant Navy helicopters was to swoop in and whisk all the Americans back to the desert airfield where revved-up C-130 transports were waiting to take off to freedom.

Rainie wrote: "Months of preparations would have come into play once the team was at the embassy wall. As almost 30 practice missions at an embassy replica the CIA training base at Camp Peary, Va., taught them, the team would have moved to cut telephone and electric lines. Each commando had an assignment — wipe out a technical gadget or take out a guard."

Rainie could not be reached for further comment about the Camp Peary connection, but a Daily News editor in the Washington bureau, Frank Jackman, said the training at the sprawling CIA base was limited to ground exercises and that the flight portion of the training was conducted at Nellis Air Force Base out West.

Jackman said it was his understanding from Rainie that the CIA did not participate in the Camp Peary training except to provide the replica. "He did not believe the CIA was actively involved there. If they were, he would have put in the story."